

**BUTTE COUNTY  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION  
Friday, December 19, 2003  
Special Meeting Minutes**

Held at the Mira Loma Drive county offices, the meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Item 1: Introductions

Commissioners present: Marian Gage, Chair Mark Lundberg, Sandra Machida, Karen Marlatt, Linda Moore, Phyllis Murdock, Gene Smith; and Alternates: Jeff Fontana, Mary Neumann

Commissioners absent: Patricia Cragar, Jane Dolan

Staff present: Anna Dove, Bobbi Dunivan, Eva Puciata, and Susan Billings

Staff absent: Cheryl Giscombe

Also present were: Sheryl Bell/Skyway House, Mark Murgia/CAABCI, Elizabeth Porter/Skyway House, Aimee Myles/BCPH, Peggy Mitchell/BCOE, Dolores Marcotte/Enloe, Mark Richmond/CAABCI, Cindy Wolff/CSUC, Kris Simpson/BCDA, Barbara Hanna/HHCM, Lynn Theissen/HHCM, Siobhan Sherman/CAABCI, Ann Dickman/BCPH, Helen Turner, and others who arrived later.

Chair Mark Lundberg opened the meeting with introductions.

Item 2: Funding Available for 2004 RFP

The Contract Award Committee recommended adoption and approval of Funding Option B presented by Analyst Eva Puciata. Option B is: of \$4,278,800 projected available for the 2004 RFP, \$477,588 is already allocated to Funding Priority Area 3 (School Readiness Program), and \$405,000 already allocated to Funding Priority Area 2 (REWARD). Further, the \$750,276 remaining for Funding Priority Area 2 (Early care and education providers are competent . . .) will not be included in the RFP scheduled for release in January, pending Commission continued funding of REWARD (Should Commission decide to not continue REWARD, a separate RFP will be issued.). Option B allows up to \$2,645,936 for awarding in the 2004 RFP.

**Phyllis Murdock made a motion to adopt and approve the Funding Allocation Option B. Karen Marlatt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Item 3: Current Grantee Contract Amendment

The current "Big Grants" are nearing the end of their second year, and contracts are up for the third year. Due to late start-up, many of the big grantees have funds left over from years one and two, in addition to year three funds. Instead of just extending the contracts for one year, the Contract Award Committee recommended that contractors be allowed to write budgets and SOW's for 18 months, to allow spending the remaining awards.

Phyllis Murdock supported an extension, but wanted to go longer than six months. If grantees can show that they are leveraging funds, why limit the amount of time they have to expend them?

Jeff Fontana noted that as new programs develop, there are going to be start-up and sustainability issues. The Commission ought to provide an atmosphere that encourages additional funding from outside sources to maintain grantee programs. If it means extending contracts for six months, a year, or even further, this is the kind of program support that will have a lasting value in the community.

Gene Smith suggested that the Commission strike the wording 'for an additional six months' from Item 3, thereby refraining from setting a specific time limit on extensions. The Commissioners voiced agreement with Gene's suggestion.

**Phyllis Murdock made a motion to approve big grants to be extended to a date that would allow expending the remaining awarded grant monies and maximize leveraged dollars. Gene Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### Item 4: Funding Policy Manual

Phyllis Murdock said the Administration Committee has not reviewed the action items listed. She was under the impression that today's special meeting was called to address specific, time-sensitive issues with the RFP. Marian Gage shared her concern that portions of Item 4 may be linked to the RFP. It was decided that there would be adequate time to send a letter of clarification to all applicants prior to the January 30, 2004 Grantee meeting. Phyllis suggested that Item 4 be referred to the Administration Committee for review during their January 5, 2004 meeting. Any further discussion could come back to the Commission for the January 16, 2004 regular meeting.

**Phyllis Murdock made a motion to table Item 4, in its entirety, to the Administration Committee for review and place the item on the January 16, 2004 Commission Meeting Agenda for Discussion/Action. Sandra Machida seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### Item 5: Adoption of DRAFT 2004 Request for Proposals

- A. *Categories One and Two.* It was recommended that there be the creation of two levels of applicants, those who are applying for BCCFC funding for the first time, and those who are reapplying for funding. Current contractors would also be given the opportunity to apply for funds during the new funding cycle, but would be required to clarify how they were funded in the past, what was accomplished with those funds, etc. For example, current grantees that apply for funds with a *new grant idea* would be treated like a new grantee. Current grantees that apply for expansion funds on current projects would be considered Category 2, or previously granted, and would need to complete additional paperwork on prior funding and progress. There would be slight differences in scoring between the categories, as well. Phyllis Murdock questioned why two categories are being created. If a current grantee applied for additional funding, the Commission would already be familiar with their program and its accomplishments. She felt that it might be unnecessarily complicated for the applicants. Marian Gage explained that the Commission hires outside readers to initially review RFP's. For an outside reader that is unfamiliar with our grantees, this level of detail gives them the opportunity to review each grantee's accomplishments and program goals. Jeff Fontana felt that the language on page 2, paragraph 2 of the RFP was too complicated and offered to work on simplifying the language.

**Gene Smith made a motion to approve Item 5A, the creation of categories for two levels of applicants. Karen Marlatt seconded the motion. The motion passed with one opposition.**

- B. *Funding Levels.* The Contract Awards Committee has recommended that grants be limited to up to \$100,000 for the first year, up to \$100,000 for the second year, and up to \$75,000 for the third year. The third year reduction would serve as incentive to grantees to make efforts to obtain sustainability.

**Gene Smith made a motion to adopt the funding levels as described in Item 5B. Phyllis Murdock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- C. *Rating Process.* The Chair suggested taking Item 5C, #1 and #2 in opposite order.

2) *Process*. It was the recommendation of the Contract Award Committee that the Commission hire readers to rate RFP's and that readers be broken into teams, based on the number of RFP's received. All readers on the same team would read the same RFP's and score them individually. Readers would be given up to three weeks to read all of the proposals assigned to them and to complete preliminary scoring. There would be a one-day calibration event, at which time final scores would be assigned to the individual applicants by each team. It was strongly recommended that during this one-day calibration, each group be assisted by a table "lead" who would provide guidance and answer questions. It was recommended that staff hold lead positions or, if sufficient staff is not available, that Commissioners act as leads.

Marian Gage noted that the review process suggested for this year is similar to that used in prior years, and is intended to keep the Commissioners away from the rating process by hiring outside readers. The California Department of Education awards a lot of grant money using processes like the one being proposed and readers would likely be local community experts. If hired, the readers would have sole power over which grants were approved and came before the Commission, and which were not. Once scores were ranked, the Commission would receive a copy of the score rating system, as well as individual scores and reader comments on the top applicants.

Phyllis Murdock felt that one of her responsibilities as a Commissioner is to personally read and score each proposal, and get to know each of the applicants and understand what they are trying to do for the community. She wanted the record to show that she would take strong exception at being unable to read and score each and every proposal, and that she feels uncomfortable leaving the process up to outside readers. Other Commissioners felt wary about leaving the process to outside readers, especially when deciding the fate of multiple years of funding. A comment from the public argued that outside readers might not recognize the work grantees have done in regards to the Strategic Plan or the heart involved in what they are doing in the community. Marian brought up the issue of conflicts of interest as a possible obstacle to the Commissioners serving as readers. How would conflict of interest situations be handled? If a Commissioner left the room during portions of the proceeding where conflict of interest was an issue, and therefore did not vote on said issue, how would the point system be affected?

Gene Smith suggested opening up the definition of the term 'reader' to include Commissioners. This would be a compromise where Commissioners could participate in the reader process on a voluntary basis and readers would fill the gaps.

*The Chair called for a break from 10:10- 10:25 A.M.*

Mark Lundberg recalled that the last round of RFP's had to meet an 85% cut, with any proposals falling below the cut not coming under consideration for possible funding. What about a screening process, including both readers and Commissioners, where we could bring forward the top proposals (85% and above) to the Commission for review? Commissioners seemed comfortable with the idea as a fair compromise. Mark noted that on a future agenda, the issue of conflicts of interest for readers and Commissioners would be addressed.

**Gene Smith made a motion to form a team of readers, including Commissioners, to screen and score all Requests For Proposal and recommend the top 85% to the full Commission for funding consideration, that all Commissioners read the top proposals under consideration for funding, and that the calibration event be open to the public. Phyllis Murdock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- 1) *Recommended Stipend.* The Contract Award Committee recommended that a stipend in the amount of \$200 for the one-day calibration be approved for each reader. No stipend would be available for Commissioners volunteering in the reading process.

**Gene Smith made a motion to adopt the Stipend Recommendation. Marian Gage made an amendment of the stipend amount to up to \$500, based on how many proposals are submitted for review. Marian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- D. *Letter of Intent – Category One or Two.* Approval of the letter of intent, required to be submitted to the Commission by each applicant, which now has Category One and Two options.

**Karen Marlatt made a motion to approve the Letter of Intent. Sandra Machida seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioners went page by page over the RFP document, noting typos and minor changes. Of significance was a typo on page 2, where the amount for Priority Area 3 should have been \$592,112. The RFP's release date will be delayed to January 20, 2004 to allow time for corrections and changes.

**Karen Marlatt made a motion to approve the RFP, pending changes. Sandra Machida seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Item 6: Membership of Contract Award Committee

At the last Commission meeting, Phyllis Murdock requested that she be a part of the Contract Award Committee. No more than four Commissioners sit on any Ad Hoc Committee to assure adherence to the Brown Act's allowance for closed meetings. During that meeting, Karen Marlatt offered to step down from the Committee to allow Phyllis Murdock to take part in that portion of the Commission's work. With the change, the new members of the Contract Award Committee will be Marian Gage, Mark Lundberg, Gene Smith, and Phyllis Murdock.

**Sandra Machida made a motion to allow Karen Marlatt to step down from her position on the Contract Award Committee and for Phyllis Murdock to take over the vacant position. Karen Marlatt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Linda Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Karen Marlatt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

Minutes by Susan Billings  
Administrative Assistant